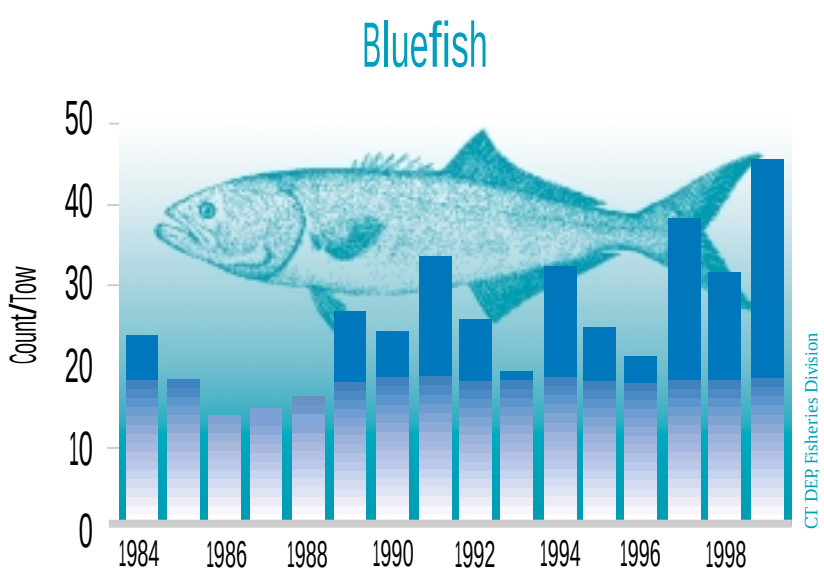
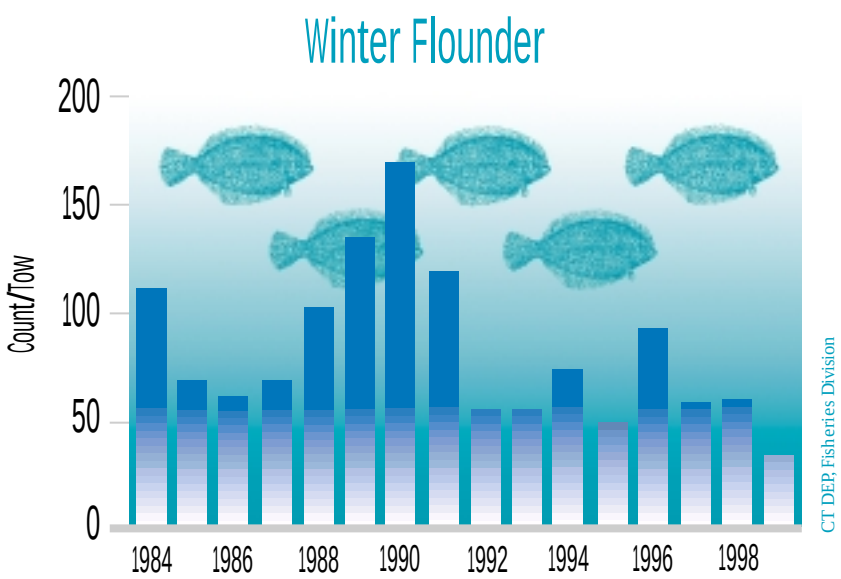
FINFISH

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, marine fish stocks plummeted in Long Island Sound. All of the principal species supporting the recreational and commercial fisheries of the Sound were considered overfished. These included bluefish, striped bass, winter flounder, fluke, scup, tautog, and weakfish. These fish comprise 95 percent of the species sought by anglers and commercially-licensed seafood producers. All of the species listed are now managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. A combination of environmental conditions leading to improved recruitment (the number of young produced per year) for some species and fishery management measures to limit exploitation and rebuild stock for others has helped “turn the corner” for Long Island Sound fishery productivity. However, there still remains a great deal of work to be done to improve fish stocks.

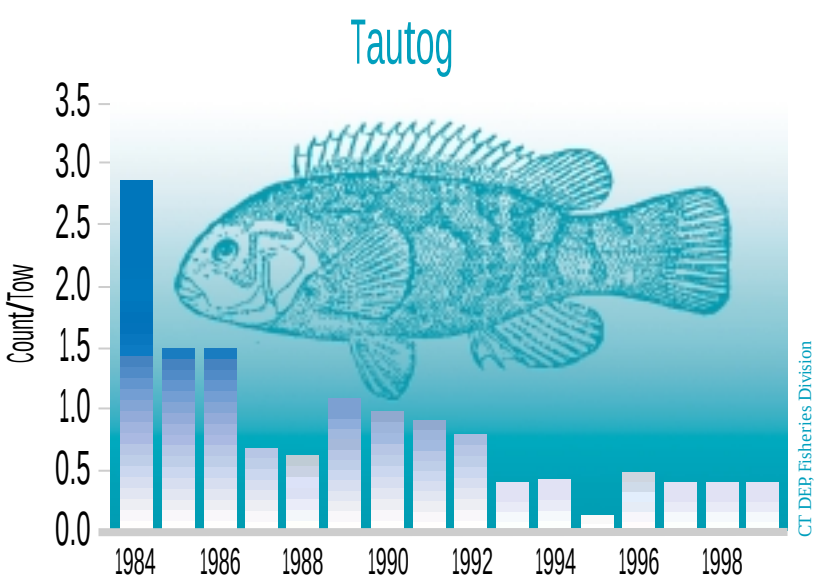
Bluefish, Winter Flounder, and Tautog Abundance



Bluefish are one of the more highly migratory of Long Island Sound’s principal fishery resources. Availability of prey in the Sound, exploitation elsewhere, and oceanography all have a substantial effect on the abundance and distribution of bluefish and their availability in the Sound. Currently, the bluefish is considered overfished throughout its range and additional management options are being considered.



Winter flounder is a commercially and recreationally important species that resides in Long Island Sound waters. Winter flounder was severely overfished in the 1980s. The fishery has been recovering in response to restrictive management measures. While stocks have shown modest improvement in the last three years, they remain far below the long-term average.



Tautog, or blackfish, find the rocks and boulders left by glacial deposition in Long Island Sound an ideal "reef" habitat. Continuing low tautog counts indicate that the species has not yet responded to more stringent management measures that were implemented in 1997.

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY

This advisory refers to sport fish that people catch. It does not apply to fish bought in stores. Due to the possibility that ingested fish will have elevated concentrations of contaminants, the following marine organisms have consumption advisories issued by the NYS Department of Health and CT Department of Public Health:

Marine Bluefish and Eels—

NY: Eat no more than one meal per week of bluefish or eels. (PCB contamination) CT: Bluefish 13-25" - Eat no more than one meal per month. Bluefish over 25" - Eat no more than one meal per 2 months; high risk group (women of childbrearing age, pregnant women, and children under 6) should not eat bluefish over 25". Eels: Do not eat eels.

Marine Striped Bass—

NY: Women of childbearing age and children under 15 should not eat striped bass taken from Long Island Sound west of Wading River. Others should eat no more than one meal per month from the above-mentioned area. Everyone should eat no more than one meal per week of striped bass taken from Long Island Sound east of Wading River. (PCB contamination) CT: High risk group should not eat striped bass. All others should eat one meal per 2 months.

Crabs and Lobsters—

CT/NY: Hepatopancreas (green meat or mustard) should not be eaten (PCB, cadmium, and dioxin contamination).
For more information, visit
www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/fish
www.state.ct.us/dph/BCH/eech/webfsh